

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 000868

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHY OF MOHAMED BEDJAOUI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman, reasons 1.4(b)(d).

[1](#)1. (U) Following is a biographical summary of the Algeria's new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Bedjaoui, the former President of the Constitutional Council from May 2002 until the announcement of his new appointment on May 1:

Mohamed Bedjaoui was born in Sidi-Bel Abbes (Algeria) on September 21, 1929. He graduated from Grenoble University in France with a B.A. in law and following that worked as a lawyer at the Court of Grenoble from 1951 to 1953. Bedjaoui subsequently received two doctoral degrees from the University of Grenoble in 1956, in law and political science. In 1956 he also began working as a researcher at the French National Scientific Research Center (CNRS) in France.

At the start of the Algerian revolution in 1956, the FLN appointed Bedjaoui to be their legal advisor, a position he commenced in France and took with him as he returned to Algeria in 1956. He maintained that position within the Algerian Provisional Government from 1956 until independence was achieved in 1962 at the Evian negotiations, in which he took part. Beginning in 1962, Bedjaoui began a long career as a distinguished Algerian official: Secretary General to the Government, an administrative position tracking legal developments (1962-1964); Minister of Justice (1964-1970); his diplomatic debut as Ambassador to France (1970-1979); permanent delegate to UNESCO (1971-1979); Ambassador to the U.N. and simultaneously President of the Group of 77 in New York (1979-1982).

From 1979 to 1982, Bedjaoui also occupied the positions of Vice President of the U.N. Council for Namibia and President of the contact group for Cyprus. Bedjaoui became Co-President of the inquiry commission for the release of American diplomats in Iran in 1980. From 1982-1992, he was a judge at the International Court of the Hague and was appointed President of the Court 1993-1997. Bedjaoui was the first judge from the Arab world to have such a high position at the Court.

In 1999, President Lamine Zeroual appointed Bedjaoui to be the President of the National Commission for Presidential Elections. In 2002, he was appointed President of the Constitutional Council, in which capacity he oversaw the handling of the April 2004 presidential election in Algeria.

Bedjaoui was awarded the Ordre de la Resistance d'Algerie, and has also been awarded the Ordre du Merite Alaouite de Royaume du Maroc, the Ordre de la Republique d'Egypte, and the Ordre National du Mali.

Bedjaoui is the author of several publications and 300 articles on law, including "La Revolution Algerienne et le Droit" (article, 1963); "Non-Alignement et Droit International (book, 1970); and "Traites et Conventions de l'Algerie" (compilation, 1963-4).

[1](#)2. (C) Initial domestic reactions among Embassy sources to Bedjaoui's appointment were overwhelmingly positive. Contacts called him a "heavy-weight of diplomacy." Others said that he would bring a sense of "refinement and culture" to the MFA. A former Algerian Ambassador said, "It's about time that the Algerian diplomatic establishment is headed by a real diplomat and not by a renegade from the FLN or the RND (Rassemblement National pour la Democratie)." One parliamentarian did express reservations about appointing someone of Bedjaoui's elevated age. Presidential Chief of Staff Belkheir told Ambassador May 2 that Bedjaoui had been selected because of his considerable international experience and the excellent image he will project for Algeria.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: At age 76, Bedjaoui enjoys international stature and is well and favorably known to the Embassy. He is also a great admirer of the United States and has a copy of the U.S. Declaration of Independence on his study wall. As a trusted and long-time friend of President Bouteflika from the pre-independence period and as an elder statesman with no political ambition, Bedjaoui will enjoy a close and non-threatening relationship with Bouteflika, who can be expected to use him to help project an image of competence, respectability, and moderation on the world scene. Given his international experience, he will also likely project a more urbane -- or at least secular world view onto Algerian

foreign affairs in contrast to his conservative Islamic
nationalist predecessor, outgoing FM Belkhedem.
ERDMAN